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GENEALOGY COLLECTION

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William and Martha
TOMLINSON
of Kentucky
1749-1844

Written by
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36189

11th Reunion Iowa Tomlinson Tribe
August 14, 1932, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa

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William and Martha Tomlinson of Kentucky, 1749-1844. Mt. Pleasant, Ia. 1932.

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William and Martha TOMLINSON

of Kentucky

1749-1844

36189

THE TOMLINSON COAT OF ARMS — 1600

The following sketch on the lives of these two, my grandfather's grandparents is based partly on facts and considerable imagination as to what might have been their lives in that early days of the building of Kentucky, and is so submitted to you.

When the boy William struggled to awaken, he discovered it was the harsh voice of a woman that bade him get up and go out after the cow. Before he was fully awakened there came the deafening roar of a flintlock which was discharged thru the half opened door of the cabin, somewheres in Virginias. Above the feindish gobble of indians with which the cabin swarmed, he heard shrieks of mortal hurt and terror. The bed clothing was snatched from over him and a strong painted wrist seized his arm and dragged him from the bunk

His captor brandished a tomahawk before his eyes ordering him in guttural language "Boy no talk" in such fierce tones that his screams turned into a wail. On the floor lay the dead bodies of an older girl and a boy. He was dragged to the door by his captor, stumbling over the dead forms, dragged into the yard where stood a tall gaunt women with a rope around her neck, her hands tied with rawhide behind her back in custody of two big savages. They entered the forest just as day was breaking and the woods were lighted by the glare of the burning cabin. A thorn pricked his bare foot, stones bruised him and briars scratched him as he was dragged roughly along. He tried to pick the thorn from his foot but the savage behind him kicked him roughly and said "Boy hurry." Some dozen warriors marched single file with the woman and himself. He was fiercely hungry before they had been on the march an hour, and he suffered for a drink of water. The gaunt figure of the woman strode on as if she would never tire or falter. This woman had always impressed him as driving and relentless. Of his own mother he had but dim recollection, only a vague remembrance of a loving presence. After her premature death his father, Joshia had drifted to the new west, presumably Kentucky with the husband of the woman with whom he had been left. Neither were ever heard from again, and the small boy, William had been left an unwelcome burden on the hands of this woman, a stern creature, no doubt harrased by the task of caring for her family alone, without an added mouth to feed, and she had no time for tenderness. Now he drew comfort from having her with him. Her presence seemed to give him strength. His legs grew weary and each foot was a burden to lift. But whenever he lagged, a fierce indian behind him who could speak a few words of broken English, commanded him "Boy hurry." The woman wise to the ways of indians told him that he would have to keep going or they would kill him if he couldn't keep up with them. The boy had never dis obeyed this woman and now he trotted along with renewed energy, fatigue dragging at him but fear giving him added strength.

The savages stopped at a spring to wait for others and William threw himself face down into the spring and drank his fill of cold water. A distant sound of shooting and the faint gobble of indians could be heard, an attack being made on some cabins near by. The fighting continued for a short time and soon a long string of savages came thru the woods having with them three men captives. On the continued march these men told the woman that they were bound men working out their passage from over seas and had gotten up early to milk the cows, the other settlers not yet having risen, they had been attacked and captured, those in the houses barricading their doors, fought the indians off and they had left, taking considerable booty as well as the three prisoners.

The men were loaded down with plunder and one of them becoming weary stumbled and fell and was immediately dispatched by a tomahawk. He was scalped and the woman commanded to pick up his bundle, which she did and placed it on her strong shoulders, striding on as if she had not the added burden. "Them as took us, said the woman to the captives, was the fierce tribes of Wyandottes, and them that took you was Senecas. The tribes must all be out against the whites again."

William had reached the point of exhaustion and stumbled but the recollection of the fate of the man, gave him renewed vigor as he spurted along the trail. The big indian behind him had been watching his efforts and seeing his utter exhaustion picked him up and sat him upon his broad shoulders saying, "purty good boy."

The party halted at nightfall and fires were built, those having gruesome scalps fashioned rude hoops of twigs which they leaned in front of the fire to dry. Each white scalp was greatly prized. When one is only seven years of age one could not judge the grief of an old woman for her dead children. William did not grieve for the loss of his playmates, as they were older than he, and treated him rough and imposed upon him. He saw the woman grim and unweilding sit in front of the fire and partake of parched corn and dried meat, which was given him, and he could not tell if she grieved for her family or not. They sat dozing by the fire. When the indians were sleepy they tied the men and the woman flat on their backs, lashed their arms to poles laid horizontally, staked out by their feet, no chance to turn and relieve tired muscles, or strained tendons and they were left all night in that position. Up at dawn they proceeded on their way. All day they marched and at nightfall reached a big river which the woman said was the Ohio.

They crossed by means of canoes that were hidden in the brush. All west and north of the Ohio was wild indian country clear thru to the Illinois and occupied by savage tribes, who now it seemed were all out on the warpath caused by the encroachment of the white

people upon their territory, the settlers coming in fast from the Virginias, Pennsylvania and North Carolina. North of the Ohio had not yet been opened up but Kentucky was rapidly becoming settled in the eastern part. The millitary had come west to protect the settlers. They did not understand indian ways as did the border men and they would not work with them or take advice from the frontier men, and had no conception of indian warfare, and as a result doing very little to protect the settlers.

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Crossing the Ohio the savages and prisoners floundered thru swamps, and finally after days journey came to the edge of a clearing in which was a sizeable camp. An excited throng of savages greeted the newcomers, and a heated discussion took place between the tribes. After a lengthy powow of the chiefs people the men prisoners were divested of their clothing and the two stood naked staring stupidly looking about them, knowing nothing of the fate that awaited them. They were shoved forward and compelled to run the gauntlet thru a lane of savages and squaws each indian striking at them with knives and tomahawks as they ran, trying to see how badly they could hurt and mutilate them without killing them. They were reserved for a crueler fate however and were to be further torture and burned at the stake. From his perch on the big indian's shoulder he observed these sinister preparations He saw a big burley white man dressed in buckskin, his skin as brown as an indians, and he wondered why he did not do something to help the prisoners But he only grinned approval. The victims reached the council house and now knew of the gastly fate that awaited them. The woman and William were placed in a hut under guard, and the two male prisoners coated with bears grease and black paint. The white man came in the hut and the woman asked him why he did not buy the prisoners. Not much, he would not. He enjoyed seeing the victims suffer. At nightfall the prisoners were led out and tied to stakes and bonfires built around them. William was aroused by screams of agony that froze the blood All thru the night he awoke as some particular hellish shriek came to his ear. But the fear and horror of it had fixed the face of the man upon his memory and later in life when William encountered him killed him for some feindish act. When morning came the sounds had died down, the wo man spoke to him that the indian had decided in council that she was to go with the Wyandottes and he was to go with the Shawnees. They will treat you well she said. What my lot will be remains to be seen. Good Bye, and they parted never to see each other again. Such partings as these occured many times as the land hungry settlers were captured by the fierce tribes and taken into the wilderness.

William traveled several days more with his captors to the southwest the big indian showing friendliness to the boy and see

ing that he had something to eat, finally they came to a large indian town which William later came to know as the chief village of the Shawnee Nation. The big indian took him to a cabin and gave him over to a young squaw who had a boy about his age. She took him to the creek nearby and taking off his tattered garments gave him a thoro scrubbing and dressed him in soft deerskin leggins and mocasins. He had traveled so many days and so far that he thought that this was another over night stop. But when morning came he was not called to go on the trail, but was given food by the woman, and the indian boy brought other youths to the door of the cabin to show them the white captive and the woman went with other women to work in the fields. She returned in the evening and gave him food and taking him to other lodges where he was also given food. Next morning she left him with several indian boys and the one who he was to find to be his foster brother, was proud to show him to his playmates. He was well treated by every one, later in the evening the big indian returned carrying a load of bear meat and a deer which he had killed. He took his place at the head of the household lodge as a natural thing, and William learned that he was adopted by this big Shawnee to take the place of an older boy who had died. His indian father presented him with a small bow and a bark quiver filled with arrows, and taught him how to shoot.

His indian mother lavished her affections upon him caring for him making him new clothing and preparing food for him. He was ever ready to help her and came to love her as any son would. She cared for him and in every way treated him as well as she did her own son, his foster brother called "Standing Bear." As the principal occupation of the warriors was to supply game, hunting parties were imitated by the boys of the tribes and he accompanied his playmates on long hunting trips, which were almost daily affairs, and he learned to shoot small game with his bow and arrows and know all the birds and animals that inhabitated the forest. Standing Bear would hold up his hand when he heard a bird call and repeat its name in indian language, William rapidly learned these names and in turn he taught the boys such games as he knew and learning theirs with great aptness; learned to stalked the others in their war games, lie motionless for hours alongside a log or in a tree top. One day one of the boys whistled the call of a bird flying overhead, William repeated the call with such accuracy that the boys were astonished and signalled for him to do it again. He did so and gave many more such calls and their admiration was sincere. William had been adept at making bird calls from his earliest recollection knowing at his former home all the birds and animals of the woods, imitating them and this was also the training of the indian boys, and they were amazed that a white boy

should know them better than they did. He was asked to give the calls before the braves around the campfire that night and many were the "HOWS" of praise given him by the warriors. He rapidly learned the Shawnee tongue. By spring he was proficient in the sign languages of the entire allied tribes. He had become skilled in scouting, in the various sports and games of the youth and much of their games pertained to real war, learned to be a real scout in a manner that greatly pleased his adopted father and drew the attention of the chiefs of the tribe. From his brother he learned that there were many white men in the camps though he could not tell them by their appearance. He became a friend of Gray Fox a white man who had been captured when about 16 years of age and who could only remember now a few words of the white language. He had become separated from his people, had adopted the life of an indian and would always be an indian.

William's adopted father bestowed upon him a many sylabled word meaning "Talk With Birds" from his proficiency and by such name he was afterwards always known by the allied tribes.

A treaty had many years before been made by the indians north of the Ohio with those of the south that Kentucky should be neutral hunting grounds and as game was abundant there, all tribes should do their hunting in a peaceful way. This had been many years before a white man had set foot on the beautiful valleys and wooded hills, South of the Ohio.

One William Tomlinson an uncle of our hero had come from the old regions of Virginias, with a party of men exploring the eastern part of Kentucky. This was some twenty-five years before Daniel Boone and his small band of woodsmen had ever been heard of, and it was real pioneering in those days. William the uncle had erected a small cabin for safety, as headquarters for the exploring party, had made a clearing and planted beans, pumpkins and corn, and by the time the main party arrived had a comfortable place for them. After propecting a few years on this frontier he returned to Virginia and moved his family to the new west. This was in the vicinity of Barbourville and the Legion Boys of that post have taken the stones that formed the chimney of this cabin in Kentucky and made a monument of them with a bronze plate giving the names of the explorers, perpetuating the location of the first house erected in Kentucky by white men. Nicholas Tomlison was also a defender of Bryan's Station near Lexington from the British and Indians. He was very prominent in the affairs of Kentucky, and his descendants number many in the south.

The subject of our sketch had grown up wise in the ways of the indians, had attained by his bravery much renown, and although very young was allowed to sit in the councils with the braves. One day some war parties had returned from an expedition with

some captives and he saw a squaw scrubbing a little golden haired girl of perhaps six years of age. She- was screaming and sobbing and he spoke to- her- telling her that the woman would not hurt her and for her not to be afraid, that he would not let them hurt her. She broke loose from the squaw and threw her wet quivering body upon him clinging to him and sobbing "I'se so 'Fraid." He comforted her as best he could and ever afterwards she worshiped him and attributed the good treatment she received from the Indians to him, and here the romance of William Tomlinson and Martha Coppock had its beginning. He was just seven years the elder. Her parents and brothers had been killed, one brother only being left. He was captured by another tribe of Indians. The white men of the Virginia's were called "Long Knives" by the Indians from their habit of fighting with sabers. Standing Bear, the Indian brother, had been badly wounded in a battle with the whites when he tried to save the body of his father, "Kill Fox." William had suddenly attained real responsibility. Now it became his task to supply food for his father's lodge. Wild game was plentiful most seasons of the year but there were long times of famine. This was when Indians shared with each other even to the last morsel of food. William learned responsibility and craftiness. He grew to be a leader of his tribe. As head of the lodge, he advised the tribes.

Martha had been given the name of "White Fawn." It was a beautiful name for this blue eyed, golden haired girl, and she was dressed in a tiny suit of soft buckskin gaily ornamented and her one thought in life was to haunt the footsteps of her hero. William accepted her devotion to him with the indifference of a youth with many other things to divert his mind, but she always obeyed him implicitly. He taught her to rid herself of the vermin that infested the camps, he instructed her to turn her clothing wrongside out and lay it on a red ant hill and she was soon rid of pests. He taught her to swim like an otter, and shoot a bow and arrow. She told himof her name and her mother, that she was called Mollie; "Martha" he said and she nodded. She was ever known to him as "White Fawn" her Indian name. Some years after she came to the tribe, a treaty had been effected with the whites that all white captives should be exchanged to the whites, and William was very much afraid for White Fawn. One day he returned from a hunt to find his mother and brother much downcast. They told him that the white man had come to the village and wanted him to go away with them. He was not much alarmed but was afraid for his "White Fawn" and when next the white men came he took her into the woods to stay until they left. One day there came to the village a large white man asking of the chiefs that William be turned over to him so that he could take him to his uncle's home in North Caro-

lina. William held out strongly against going but the tribes in council decided that he should go. His mother was wailing, White Fawn had been taken into the forest, his foster brother could not be found and his companion warriors told him that if the Long Knives did not treat him right to come back to them "Pooty Quick." Profound grief prevailed in all his lodge. The youth planned desperately to escape from his captors. In the middle of the night, an anguished wail, a despairing cry from the forest, expressing the same feelings as he had at parting and for the first time his heart became actually aware of the strength of the bond between White Fawn and himself. She was grieving at his departure. From the timber came the plaintiff cooing of a mourning dove. Later the startled note of a kill deer, later the faint call of a crow. He knew these calls to be from Standing Bear signalling to him, and grieving at his departure. The white men were amazed. They could not understand the longing to return to his wild home by this boy, and his grieving for his wild companions. The guides could understand, being woodsmen. They explained to the men from Carolina that he was a "young Shawnee now." We will pass over the next five years of William's life at his uncle's home. He had attained to powerful manhood.

He had received a good education at a private school at his relatives home in the settlements. He ranked well with the masters. He was a prime favorite with the community folk but on two occasions had suddenly disappeared and returned months later from no one knew where, and he would not tell. His longing for his brothers of the forest would come to him and the thoughts of White Fawn out in the forests alone would cause great anguish to come into his heart. The Colonies at this time were awaiting the first "Shot for Liberty." The great Patrick Henry had issued the call. It came with a sudden uprising of the entire Indian Confederacy. William disappeared and no one knew where he had gone. Some months had elapsed and on the grounds of his uncle's plantation the guards sighted a lone Indian skulking from tree to tree. They gave the alarm and his uncle coming out, the supposed Indian called to him saying that he was a white. William was dressed as an Indian, with scalp lock, skin as brown as any Indian, and was taken by the guards as such. He told his uncle that he had returned to warn him of the uprising. That the British were furnishing supplies to the tribes. The Shawnee's are neutral so far, "but I don't know if I can keep them so.' The British have bought most of the allied tribes. My lot lies on the frontier. The trails are covered with war parties. You must warn the settlers going down the Ohio river that they are in great danger from all the tribes of the north side of the river. I have taken my life in hand. A british renegade has offered an immense sum for my scalp. He has many tribes on the lookout for me. I have evaded him so far.

A certain Wyandotte chief who is a friend of yours bade me come here and warn you. Well says his astonished uncle, here you are dressed as an indian, and wearing only a scalplock! I have a commssion for you in the colonies signed by the great general "Patrick Henry" himself? William replied. "It was this or loose all" I will have to decline the Commission as I have already collected a band of woodsmen and we are patrolling the border for war parties. These men fight without pay, and shift for themselves. I will bid you good bye and return to them at once. And he slipped into the forest, going back to Kentucky and living with his men along the Kentucky shore of the Ohio, protecting the settlers coming down the Ohio on flat boats loaded with their household goods and cattle. Many were the rushes made by the indians along the north shore to plunder these boats. Men who had once been white, even women and children were used to lure those on the boats to pull into that shore to rescue these supposed captured prisoners. Meanwhile the indians remained hidden until the boats were near enough to the shore for an attack, and plunder.

The long years of the border warfare was drawing to a close. The British had suffered defeat. William's men had disbanded. During all these years they had lived like prowling panthers, dressed as indians, seldom sleeping in the same place twice, and had been victorous in many battles, and had cleared the way for the rapidly movement of the settlers into Kentucky.

William now wished to return to the north for White Fawn. His was a dangerous and difficult task. The hostile tribes knew him well and the renegade British offered bigger inducements for his scalp, hoping to have him killed by the savages, and had offered the head of "White Fawns" lodge a big price for her. The chief of the tribe knowing of the liking for her by "Talk With Birds" having grown up with him from boyhood had so far refused to part with and she was still in the village. William succeded in getting through the dangerous country, had started with White Fawn for the Ohio river. Once he was captured; White Fawn escaped and the Wyandotte captors after much parley as to his disposal, started for the renegade Britishers village to get the ransom but he was rescued with great difficulty by White Fawn, they both escaped and after many hardships they reached the Ohio. William took her to the settlements and left her with her relatives while he took a large party including his uncles household into Kentucky to take up new claims, and then he returned for White Fawn. They were married at the settlement, and wended their way to their new home in Kentucky where they found his claim had been squatted on by three settlers; he was so disgusted with these grasping

whites that he relinquished his rights and went on farther into the great blue grass regions of Kentucky, and where they named a new town after the first battle of the Revolution— Lexington. Owing to the lives both William and Martha had led they were not contented with the thickly settled portions, and the growing towns, so took their land farther on down where the blue grass grows the tallest and where the finest horses in the world come from and where William and Martha settled amidst their broad fertile acres raising their children into straight God fearing Christian people and in whom the succeding generation have ever revered their ancestors name. The dwelling that William and his bride erected was as every house on the frontiere. A carpenter and mason were not needed for this mansion. You of the modern times have never been near such a house as these early settlers lived in. You may pass over the ground but time has erased all marks of the homes of that day. The nearest comes in mountains of Tennessee per. haps, in the home of the Mountaineer. Such were the Tomlinson early settlers, the mountaineers of North Carolina, those of Pennsylvania, when Williams ancesters and ours came from the far away land to escape persecution and lived in caves and sod cabins along the Deleware. The floor of William and Martha's cabin was of packed earth. Split punceon floor followed later. No glass in the windows Light came in when the door was open. The latter was hung on wooden hinges and fastened with a wooden latch. The furniture, in the living-kitchen-dining room-nursery-dormitory were a plain home made bed, filled with wild pigeon feathers, later a rope bed, chairs were made from a puncheon with four legs, table of same make, gourd bucket, finally a bucket made from split cedar, alternating red and white, a home made loom, a wooden corn pounder, later a mill of two round sand stones turned by hand, with a hole in the center for grain to pour in. A big fireplace, taking an eight foot log, a rack above the fireplace for the matchlock rifle. Little besides meat and hominy to cook. Game was very plentiful. Corn pone which some of older readers may remember the taste, cooked in a dutch oven, covered with coals in the fire place and left overnight.

If any of you ever go to the great state of Kentucky you will find the descendants of this wonderful couple in many of the counties of Kentucky, Tennessee and the southern states. I do not have to go there, as when I look into the faces of those before me I see them here today. Many children came to this home and these two, raised in young life as we know nothing about, had become the head of a family destined to reach on and on thru the years numbering more perhaps more than any other one branch of the Tomlinson family, and scattered to the ends of the earth.

Many blockade houses or forts were built along the frontier and one of those of importance was Bryan's station and this was founded in 1779 by four brothers of that name. This Station was located on the North Fork of the Elkhorn about five miles northeast of Lexington, and there were some twelve or fifteen families living within its walls, beside several men Scouts, Surveyors and Hunters who made the place their headquarters. Little trouble was had so far with the indians, but one day came a messenger carrying the word that a neighboring station had been captured and that all help available was needed. A number of the men started but on the way received the word that an attack on Byran's was planned and the men hurried home to protect their families. At sunrise on the 16th of August found the Station completely hemmed in by the tribes, not one of whom was visible from the stockade. The noted white renegade Girty was with the indians and had helped plan the attack and placed a number indians in front of the fort with the intention of having the whites rush out to attack them and the main body of indians come up from the rear. The Kentuckians were too well skilled in indian fighting to be caught in this manner however and orders given for each man to place himself around the stockade and repel any attack made. At this time a counter plot was arrainged by the whites that a small number of men sally out to fight the indians being covered by the rifles of those inside and at this time the alarming discovery was made that they were without water. The spring from whence they carried water was at the foot of the slope near the river, and without water they could not hope to withstand the seige. It was at this juncture that tne women of the fort proved themselves to be of very bravest and noblest heroines. While the men were consulting together, the women quietly stepped forward led by Mrs. Jemima Johnson and some of the older women, agreed to go for water. They each day had done this so it would not be different from any other day so all the women and girls carrying piggins, noggins, buckets and every utensil that would hold water went, twenty eight in all, singing and laughing and chatting as usual, to the indian surrounded spring, filling their vessels, returned to the fort, completely deceiving the indians and immediatly out rushed the men who were to draw the attack and the indians believing that all the men had come out of the fort the whole body of indians rushed forward and met the terriffic gun charge of those in the stockade. Shawnees led by Girty dashed up the hill. Grim and silent were the settlers, when at orders to fire, discharged their rifles and were handed fresh loaded ones by the women, who cleaned and loaded the guns as they fired. Fire arrows shot from the bows of the indians ignited the roofs of the cabins and were put out by

the women, and after many weary hours reenforcements commenced to arrive from nearby garrisons, the indians retreated to the northward where they were followed and the whites after crossing the river against all advise of the leaders were ambushed with much loss of life. Those left living retreated across the river and met some 500 soldiers coming to their relief. The indians escaping across the Ohio, the party returned to Bryans Station. Seventy or more killed and only seven officers remaining. Such hardships were innured by William and Martha Tomlinson during these reconstruction times.

GENEALOGY.

William Tomlinson, born 3-27, 1749. Died 3-17, 1813. 64 years.

Martha Coppock, " 1-20, 1755. Died 6-1, 1844. 89 years.

Their children were.

Joseph Tomlinson, born 1772. Died 1820.
Josiah Tomlinson, born 1776. Died 1779.
William Tomlinson, born 1778. Died 1780.
Josiah Tomlinson 2nd. Born 1781. Date of death not known.
Moses Tomlinson, born 1783. Died 1827.
Elizabeth Tomlinson. No dates known.
William Tomlinson, 2nd.
Martha Tomlinson.

Zacariah Tomlinson.

Robert Tomlinson. born 3-16, 1793. Died 12th mo. 1875
Allen Unthank Tomlinson, born 1-13, 1802. Died 5-16 1879

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